



# FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET

Kansas Department of Agriculture • Division of Food Safety and Lodging  
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## Food Safety for Group Functions

Food that is mishandled can cause very serious consequences for all, especially for at-risk groups like infants and young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. That's why it is important that volunteers be especially careful when preparing and serving food to large groups.

To begin, select a reliable person to be in charge. The person in charge should contact the local health department or the Kansas Department of Agriculture to learn the rules and regulations that apply to preparing and serving food to groups. The person in charge instructs volunteers on food safety practices, answers questions and oversees the preparation, service and cleanup at the event.

### **Avoid Cross-Contamination**

Do not cross-contaminate raw meats, poultry and fish with ready-to-eat foods. Common cross-contaminated items may include cutting boards, cooking utensils and hands.

### **Keep Hot Foods Hot and Cold Foods Cold**

Keep all poultry, meat, dairy, cooked vegetables and dishes containing these ingredients at the proper temperature. Hot foods should be above 135°F and cold foods should be below 41°F.

### **Cool Foods Quickly**

Foods need to be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours and from 70°F to 41°F within 4 more hours.

### **Reheat Foods Quickly**

Reheat all foods to 165°F within 2 hours. Make sure to check the temperature.

### **Use Thermometers**

Make sure stem thermometers calibrated and clean before measuring food temperature.

### **Healthy Food Handlers Only**

Do not allow sick people to work with food. Ensure that all food handlers are properly washing their hands and are not touching ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands. Use only disposable gloves or clean and sanitized utensils to prepare and serve ready to eat foods.

### **Transported Food and Buffets**

All food that is transported or kept on a buffet must be kept hot (135°F or above) or cold (41°F or below).

### **Toxic Materials**

Keep all toxic materials, such as cleaners, pesticides and medications separate from food preparation areas.

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing**

Ensure that all food contact surfaces are washed, rinsed and sanitized. If using a household dishwasher, be sure to not overload it, and follow the manufacturer's directions. If manually washing dishes, a simple sanitizing solution in the final rinse water is one ounce of bleach for each three gallons of water. Let manually washed, rinsed and sanitized dishes air dry.

### **Thawing Foods**

Never thaw foods on the counter at room temperature. The following methods are recommended for thawing foods safely:

- Thaw under running water (70°F or below) for less than 2 hours;
- Thaw in refrigerator at 41°F or below;
- Microwave, as part of the cooking process; or
- During a continuous cooking process.

## **Proper Hand Washing**

### **How to Wash**

- Use soap and warm running water
- Wash vigorously for 20 seconds
- Wash all surfaces, including your wrists, backs of hands, between the fingers and finger nails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Use paper towel to turn off water

### **When to Wash**

Hands should be washed before:

- Preparing food
- Eating or going on break

Hands should be washed after:

- Going to the toilet
- Coughing, sneezing or using a tissue
- Touching cuts, burns, or infected areas on the skin
- Handling dirty kitchen equipment, utensils, dishes, or soiled work surfaces
- Handling raw meat or poultry

### **Using Single-Use Gloves**

Glove use does not replace the need for good hand washing practices, so follow these guidelines:

- Wash hands before putting on gloves
- Put gloves on only when you are ready to handle ready-to-eat food
- Use gloves for only one task, such as ready-to-eat foods, then discard
- If food preparation is interrupted, remove the gloves
- Use clean gloves when you resume food preparation
- Dispose of gloves as soon as they are removed
- Single-use gloves should not be used around heat or hot fats
- Gloves are susceptible to contamination, so throw them away when they become soiled or damaged
- Fabric or reusable gloves may not be used with ready-to-eat food
- Avoid single-use gloves made of natural rubber latex